SYNOPSIS
Requires DEP to establish voluntary guidelines for K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/29/2017)
AN ACT concerning food waste in K-12 schools and institutions of higher education, and supplementing Title 13 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. Within 90 days after the effective date of this act, the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, shall establish, or work with appropriate nonprofit organizations to establish, voluntary guidelines to encourage and facilitate the ability of K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste.

   b. The guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to:

      (1) information on food waste generally, and the benefits of reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste;

      (2) recommendations for how schools can incorporate this information in their curricula, and create programs and activities for the reduction, recovery, and recycling of food waste;

      (3) recommendations for how schools can reduce the volume of surplus food they generate, including, but not necessarily limited to, conducting food audits, eliminating trays in cafeterias, enacting longer lunch periods, scheduling lunch periods after recess, establishing “offer versus serve” policies, and allowing students to keep uneaten food;

      (4) guidance on how schools can create share tables in their cafeterias where students may return uneaten food that is still in its original packaging or peel for consumption by other students, resale, or donation;

      (5) information on cost-effective, safe, and sanitary means by which schools may donate excess, unused, and edible food to food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, and other nonprofit organizations that distribute food to needy individuals; and

      (6) information on how schools can recycle their food waste, including the creation of on-site composting programs.

   c. The Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Education, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education shall post the guidelines on their respective Internet websites.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would require the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with other State agencies, to
establish voluntary guidelines for K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste. The guidelines would include, but need not be limited to: (1) information on food waste generally and the benefits of reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste; (2) recommendations for how schools can incorporate this information into their curricula and create programs and activities for the reduction, recovery, and recycling of food waste; (3) recommendations for how schools can reduce the volume of surplus food they generate; (4) guidance on how schools can create share tables in their cafeterias; (5) information on cost-effective, safe, and sanitary means by which schools may donate excess, unused, and edible food to nonprofit organizations that distribute food to needy individuals; and (6) information on how schools can recycle their food waste. The DEP, the Department of Education, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education would be required to post the guidelines on their Internet websites.